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A  
S P E E C H  
OF  
EDMUND BURKE, Esq.

At the GUILDHALL, in BRISTOL,  
PREVIOUS TO THE LATE ELECTION IN THAT CITY.

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[ Price 1s. 6d. ]

*McC. Pamphlet  
Vol. 1137*

P. E. C. H.

EDMUND BURKE, Esq.

As the Governor of the City of

London to the Hon. the Secretary of State

[1764-1765]

*Mgr J. H. Evans*  
*1137.1*  
*Miscellaneous*  
*Pamphlets*

*Juste*  
*il y a de très bonne chose de*  
**S P E E C H**  
*des cours en faveur des catholiques*  
*L'auteur d'ailleurs est un homme*  
**EDMUND BURKE, Esq.**  
*merite d'être lue.*

AT THE GUILDHALL, IN BRISTOL,

Previous to the late Election in that City,

UPON

CERTAIN POINTS RELATIVE TO HIS  
PARLIAMENTARY CONDUCT.

THE FOURTH EDITION.



LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. DODSLEY, IN Pall-mall.

M.DCC.LXXXI.

Handwritten notes at the top of the page include "AC901" and "M5". The main body of the document contains several lines of text, including "EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.", "AT THE CORNHILL IN BRISTOL", "LONDON", and "THE FOURTH EDITION". There is a circular stamp on the left side of the page. The text is printed in a serif font and is somewhat faded.

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## S P E E C H, &c.

Mr. Mayor, and Gentlemen,

I Am extremely pleased at the appearance of this large and respectable meeting. The steps I may be obliged to take will want the sanction of a considerable authority; and in explaining any thing which may appear doubtful in my public conduct, I must naturally desire a very full audience.

I have been backward to begin my canvass. The dissolution of the Parliament was uncertain; and it did not become me, by an unseasonable importunity, to appear diffident of the effect of my six years endeavours to please you. I had served the city of Bristol honourably; and the city of Bristol had no reason to think, that the means of honourable service to the public, were become indifferent to me.

I found on my arrival here, that three gentlemen had been long in eager pursuit of an object which but two of us can obtain. I found, that they had all met with encouragement. A contested election in such a city as this, is no light thing. I paused on the brink of the precipice. These three gentlemen, by various  
B merits,

merits, and on various titles, I made no doubt, were worthy of your favour. I shall never attempt to raise myself by depreciating the merits of my competitors. In the complexity and confusion of these cross pursuits, I wished to take the authentic public sense of my friends upon a business of so much delicacy. I wished to take your opinion along with me; that if I should give up the contest at the very beginning, my surrender of my post may not seem the effect of inconstancy, or timidity, or anger, or disgust, or indolence, or any other temper unbecoming a man who has engaged in the public service. If, on the contrary, I should undertake the election, and fail of success, I was full as anxious, that it should be manifest to the whole world, that the peace of the city had not been broken by my rashness, presumption, or fond conceit of my own merit.

I am not come, by a false and counterfeit shew of deference to your judgment, to seduce it in my favour. I ask it seriously and unaffectedly. If you wish that I should retire, I shall not consider that advice as a censure upon my conduct, or an alteration in your sentiments; but as a rational submission to the circumstances of affairs. If, on the contrary, you should think it proper for me to proceed on my canvass, if you will risque the trouble on your part, I will risque it on mine. My pretensions are such as you cannot be ashamed of, whether they succeed or fail.

If you call upon me, I shall solicit the favour of the city upon manly ground. I come before you with the plain confidence of an honest servant in the equity of a candid and discerning master. I come to claim your approbation, not to amuse you with vain apologies, or with professions still more vain and senseless. I have lived too long to be served by apologies, or to stand in need of them. The part I have acted has been in open day; and to hold out to a conduct, which stands in that clear and steady light for all its good and all its evil, to hold out to that conduct the paltry winking tapers of excuses and promises—I never will do it.—They may obscure it with their smoke; but they never can illumine sunshine by such a flame as theirs.

I am sensible that no endeavours have been left untried to injure me in your opinion. But the use of character is to be a shield against calumny. I could wish, undoubtedly (if idle wishes were not the most idle of all things) to make every part of my conduct agreeable to every one of my constituents. But in so great a city, and so greatly divided as this, it is weak to expect it.

In such a discordancy of sentiments, it is better to look to the nature of things than to the humours of men. The very attempt towards pleasing every body, discovers a temper always flashy, and often false and insincere. Therefore, as I have proceeded strait onward in my conduct,

so I will proceed in my account of those parts of it which have been most excepted to. But I must first beg leave just to hint to you, that we may suffer very great detriment by being open to every talker. It is not to be imagined, how much of service is lost from spirits full of activity and full of energy, who are pressing, who are rushing forward, to great and capital objects, when you oblige them to be continually looking back. Whilst they are defending one service, they defraud you of an hundred. Applaud us when we run ; console us when we fall ; cheer us when we recover ; but let us pass on—for God's sake, let us pass on.

Do you think, Gentlemen, that every public act in the six years since I stood in this place before you—that all the arduous things which have been done in this eventful period, which has crowded into a few years space the revolutions of an age, can be opened to you on their fair grounds in half an hour's conversation ?

But it is no reason, because there is a bad mode of enquiry, that there should be no examination at all. Most certainly it is our duty to examine ; it is our interest too.—But it must be with discretion ; with an attention to all the circumstances, and to all the motives ; like sound judges, and not like cavilling pettyfoggers and quibbling pleaders, prying into flaws and hunting for exceptions. Look, Gentlemen, to the *whole tenour* of your member's conduct. Try whether

whether his ambition or his avarice have jostled him out of the strait line of duty ; or whether that grand fee of the offices of active life, that master-vice in men of business, a degenerate and inglorious sloth, has made him flag and languish in his course ? This is the object of our enquiry. If our member's conduct can bear this touch, mark it for sterling. He may have fallen into errors ; he must have faults ; but our error is greater, and our fault is radically ruinous to ourselves, if we do not bear, if we do not even applaud, the whole compound and mixed mass of such a character. Not to act thus is folly ; I had almost said it is impiety. He censures God, who quarrels with the imperfections of man.

Gentlemen, we must not be peevish with those who serve the people. For none will serve us whilst there is a court to serve, but those who are of a nice and jealous honour. They who think every thing, in comparison of that honour, to be dust and ashes, will not bear to have it soiled and impaired by those, for whose sake they make a thousand sacrifices, to preserve it immaculate and whole. We shall either drive such men from the public stage, or we shall send them to the court for protection : where, if they must sacrifice their reputation, they will at least secure their interest. Depend upon it, that the lovers of freedom will be free. None will violate their conscience to please us, in order afterwards to discharge that conscience, which they

have violated, by doing us faithful and affectionate service. If we degrade and deprave their minds by servility, it will be absurd to expect, that they who are creeping and abject toward us, will ever be bold and uncorruptible assertors of our freedom, against the most seducing and the most formidable of all powers. No! human nature is not so formed; nor shall we improve the faculties, or better the morals of public men, by our possession of the most infallible receipt in the world for making cheats and hypocrites.

Let me say with plainness, I who am no longer in a public character, that if by a fair, by an indulgent, by a gentlemanly behaviour to our representatives, we do not give confidence to their minds, and a liberal scope to their understandings; if we do not permit our members to act upon a *very* enlarged view of things; we shall at length infallibly degrade our national representation into a confused and scuffling bustle of local agency. When the popular member is narrowed in his ideas, and rendered timid in his proceedings, the service of the crown will be the sole nursery of statesmen. Among the frolics of the court, it may at length take that of attending to its business. Then the monopoly of mental power will be added to the power of all other kinds it possesses. On the side of the people there will be nothing but impotence: for ignorance is impotence; narrowness of mind is impotence; timidity is itself impotence, and makes all

all other qualities that go along with it, impotent and useless.

At present, it is the plan of the court to make its servants insignificant. If the people should fall into the same humour, and should choose their servants on the same principles of mere obsequiousness, and flexibility, and total vacancy or indifference of opinion in all public matters, then no part of the state will be sound; and it will be in vain to think of saving of it.

I thought it very expedient at this time to give you this candid counsel; and with this counsel I would willingly close, if the matters which at various times have been objected to me in this city concerned only myself, and my own election. These charges, I think, are four in number;—my neglect of a due attention to my constituents; the not paying more frequent visits here;—my conduct on the affairs of the first Irish trade acts;—my opinion and mode of proceeding on Lord Beauchamp's Debtors Bills;—and my votes on the late affairs of the Roman Catholics. All of these (except perhaps the first) relate to matters of very considerable public concern; and it is not lest you should censure me improperly, but lest you should form improper opinions on matters of some moment to you, that I trouble you at all upon the subject. My conduct is of small importance.

With regard to the first charge, my friends have spoken to me of it in the style of amicable expostulation; not so much blaming the thing,

as lamenting the effects.—Others, less partial to me, were less kind in assigning the motives. I admit, there is a decorum and propriety in a member of parliament's paying a respectful court to his constituents. If I were conscious to myself that pleasure or dissipation, or low unworthy occupations, had detained me from personal attendance on you, I would readily admit my fault, and quietly submit to the penalty. But, Gentlemen, I live at an hundred miles distance from Bristol; and at the end of a session I come to my own house, fatigued in body and in mind, to a little repose, and to a very little attention to my family and my private concerns. A visit to Bristol is always a sort of canvass; else it will do more harm than good. To pass from the toils of a session to the toils of a canvass, is the furthest thing in the world from repose. I could hardly serve you *as I have done*, and court you too. Most of you have heard, that I do not very remarkably spare myself in *public* business; and in the *private* business of my constituents I have done very near as much as those who have nothing else to do. My canvass of you was not on the Change, nor in the county meetings, nor in the clubs of this city. It was in the House of Commons; it was at the Custom-house; it was at the Council; it was at the Treasury; it was at the Admiralty. I canvassed you through your affairs, and not your persons. I was not only your representative as a body; I was the agent, the solicitor of individuals; I ran about  
wherever

wherever your affairs could call me ; and in acting for you I often appeared rather as a ship-broker, than as a member of parliament. There was nothing too laborious, or too low for me to undertake. The meanness of the business was raised by the dignity of the object. If some lesser matters have slipped through my fingers, it was because I filled my hands too full ; and in my eagerness to serve you, took in more than any hands could grasp. Several gentlemen stand round me who are my willing witnesses ; and there are others who, if they were here, would be still better ; because they would be unwilling witnesses to the same truth. It was in the middle of a summer residence in London, and in the middle of a negociation at the Admiralty for your trade, that I was called to Bristol ; and this late visit, at this late day, has been possibly in prejudice to your affairs.

Since I have touched upon this matter, let me say, Gentlemen, that if I had a disposition, or a right to complain, I have some cause of complaint on my side. With a petition of this city in my hand, passed through the corporation without a dissenting voice, a petition in unison with almost the whole voice of the kingdom, (with whose formal thanks I was covered over) whilst I laboured on no less than five bills for a public reform, and fought, against the opposition of great abilities, and of the greatest power, every clause, and every word of the largest of those bills, almost to the very last day of a very long session ; all this time a canvass in Bristol was as calmly carried

carried on as if I were dead. I was considered as a man wholly out of the question. Whilst I watched, and fasted, and sweated in the House of Commons—by the most easy and ordinary arts of election, by dinners and visits, by “How do you do’s,” and, “My worthy friends,” I was to be quietly moved out of my seat—and promises were made, and engagements entered into, without any exception or reserve, as if my laborious zeal in my duty had been a regular abdication of my trust.

To open my whole heart to you on this subject, I do confess, however, that there were other times besides the two years in which I did visit you, when I was not wholly without leisure for repeating that mark of my respect. But I could not bring my mind to see you. You remember, that in the beginning of this American war (that æra of calamity, disgrace and downfall, an æra which no feeling mind will ever mention without a tear for England) you were greatly divided; and a very strong body, if not the strongest, opposed itself to the madness which every art and every power were employed to render popular, in order that the errors of the rulers might be lost in the general blindness of the nation. This opposition continued until after our great, but most unfortunate victory at Long Island. Then all the mounds and banks of our constancy were borne down at once; and the phrensy of the American war broke in upon us like a deluge. This victory, which seemed to put an immediate end to all difficulties, perfected us in that spirit of

of domination, which our unparalleled prosperity had but too long nurtured. We had been so very powerful, and so very prosperous, that even the humblest of us were degraded into the vices and follies of kings. We lost all measure between means and ends, and our headlong desires became our politics and our morals. All men who wished for peace, or retained any sentiments of moderation, were overborne or silenced; and this city was led by every artifice (and probably with the more management, because I was one of your members) to distinguish itself by its zeal for that fatal cause. In this temper of yours and of my mind, I should sooner have fled to the extremities of the earth, than have shewn myself here. I, who saw in every American victory (for you have had a long series of these misfortunes) the germ and seed of the naval power of France and Spain, which all our heat and warmth against America was only hatching into life,—I should not have been a welcome visitant with the brow and the language of such feelings. When afterwards, the other face of your calamity was turned upon you, and shewed itself in defeat and distress, I shunned you full as much. I felt sorely this variety in our wretchedness; and I did not wish to have the least appearance of insulting you with that shew of superiority, which, though it may not be assumed, is generally suspected in a time of calamity, from those whose previous warnings have been despised. I could

could not bear to shew you a representative whose face did not reflect that of his constituents; a face that could not joy in your joys, and sorrow in your sorrows. But time at length has made us all of one opinion; and we have all opened our eyes on the true nature of the American war, to the true nature of all its successes and all its failures.

In that public storm too I had my private feelings. I had seen blown down and prostrate on the ground several of those houses to whom I was chiefly indebted for the honour this city has done me. I confess, that whilst the wounds of those I loved were yet green, I could not bear to shew myself in pride and triumph in that place into which their partiality had brought me, and to appear at feasts and rejoicings, in the midst of the grief and calamity of my warm friends, my zealous supporters, my generous benefactors. This is a true, unvarnished, undisguised state of the affair. You will judge of it.

This is the only one of the charges in which I am personally concerned. As to the other matters objected against me, which in their turn I shall mention to you, remember once more I do not mean to extenuate or excuse. Why should I, when the things charged are among those upon which I found all my reputation? What would be left to me, if I myself was the man, who softened, and blended, and diluted, and weakened, all the distinguishing colours of my life, so as to

to leave nothing distinct and determinate in my whole conduct ?

It has been said, and it is the second charge, that in the questions of the Irish trade, I did not consult the interest of my constituents, or, to speak out strongly, that I rather acted as a native of Ireland, than as an English member of parliament.

I certainly have very warm good wishes for the place of my birth. But the sphere of my duties is my true country. It was, as a man attached to your interests, and zealous for the conservation of your power and dignity, that I acted on that occasion, and on all occasions. You were involved in the American war. A new world of policy was opened, to which it was necessary we should conform whether we would or not; and my only thought was how to conform to our situation in such a manner as to unite to this kingdom, in prosperity and in affection, whatever remained of the empire. I was true to my old, standing, invariable principle, that all things, which came from Great Britain, should issue as a gift of her bounty and beneficence, rather than as claims recovered against a struggling litigant; or at least, that if your beneficence obtained no credit in your concessions, yet that they should appear the salutary provisions of your wisdom and foresight; not as things wrung from you with your blood, by the cruel gripe of a rigid necessity. The first concessions, by being (much against my will) mangled and stripped of  
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the parts which were necessary to make out their just correspondence and connection in trade, were of no use. The next year a feeble attempt was made to bring the thing into better shape. This attempt (countenanced by the minister) on the very first appearance of some popular uneasiness, was, after a considerable progress through the house, thrown out by *him*.

What was the consequence? The whole kingdom of Ireland was instantly in a flame. Threatened by foreigners, and, as they thought, insulted by England, they resolved at once to resist the power of France, and to cast off yours. As for us, we were able neither to protect nor to restrain them. Forty thousand men were raised and disciplined without commission from the crown. Two illegal armies were seen with banners displayed at the same time, and in the same country. No executive magistrate, no judicature, in Ireland, would acknowledge the legality of the army which bore the king's commission; and no law, or appearance of law, authorised the army commissioned by itself. In this unexampled state of things, which the least error, the least trespass on the right or left, would have hurried down the precipice into an abyss of blood and confusion, the people of Ireland demand a freedom of trade with arms in their hands. They interdict all commerce between the two nations. They deny all new supply in the House of Commons, although in time of war. They stint the trust of the old revenue, given for two years to all the king's predecessors,

predecessors, to six months. The British Parliament, in a former session frightened into a limited concession by the menaces of Ireland, frightened out of it by the menaces of England, was now frightened back again, and made an universal surrender of all that had been thought the peculiar, reserved, uncommunicable rights of England;—The exclusive commerce of America, of Africa, of the West-Indies—all the enumerations of the acts of navigation—all the manufactures,—iron, glass, even the last pledge of jealousy and pride, the interest hid in the secret of our hearts, the inveterate prejudice moulded into the constitution of our frame, even the sacred fleece itself, all went together. No reserve; no exception; no debate; no discussion. A sudden light broke in upon us all. It broke in, not through well-contrived and well-disposed windows, but through flaws and breaches; through the yawning chasms of our ruin. We were taught wisdom by humiliation. No town in England presumed to have a prejudice; or dared to mutter a petition. What was worse, the whole Parliament of England, which retained authority for nothing but surrenders, was despoiled of every shadow of its superintendence. It was, without any qualification, denied in theory, as it had been trampled upon in practice. This scene of shame and disgrace, has, in a manner whilst I am speaking, ended by the perpetual establishment of a military power, in the dominions of this crown, without consent of the British legislature,

legislature\*, contrary to the policy of the constitution, contrary to the declaration of right: and by this your liberties are swept away along with your supreme authority—and both, linked together from the beginning, have, I am afraid, both together perished for ever.

What! Gentlemen, was I not to foresee, or foreseeing, was I not to endeavour to save you from all these multiplied mischiefs and disgraces? Would the little, silly, canvaſs prattle of obeying instructions, and having no opinions but yours, and such idle senseless tales, which amuse the vacant ears of unthinking men, have saved you from "the pelting of that pitiless storm," to which the loose improvidence, the cowardly rashness of those who dare not look danger in the face, so as to provide against it in time, and therefore throw themselves headlong into the midst of it, have exposed this degraded nation, beat down and prostrate on the earth, unsheltered, unarmed, unresisting? Was I an Irishman on that day, that I boldly withstood our pride? or on the day that I hung down my head, and wept in shame and silence over the humiliation of Great Britain? I became unpopular in England for the one, and in Ireland for the other. What then? What obligation lay on me to be popular? I was bound to serve both kingdoms. To be pleased with my service was their affair, not mine.

I was an Irishman in the Irish business, just as much as I was an American, when on the same

\* Irish perpetual mutiny act.

principles,

principles, I wished you to concede to America, at a time when she prayed concession at our feet. Just as much was I an American when I wished Parliament to offer terms in victory, and not to wait the well-chosen hour of defeat, for making good by weakness, and by supplication, a claim of prerogative, pre-eminence, and authority.

Instead of requiring it from me, as a point of duty, to kindle with your passions, had you all been as cool as I was, you would have been saved disgraces and distresses that are unutterable. Do you remember our commission? We sent out a solemn embassy across the Atlantic ocean, to lay the Crown, the Peerage, the Commons of Great Britain, at the feet of the American Congress. That our disgrace might want no sort of brightening and burnishing, observe who they were that composed this famous embassy. My Lord Carlisle is among the first ranks of our nobility. He is the identical man who but two years before, had been put forward, at the opening of a session in the House of Lords, as the mover of an haughty and rigorous address against America. He was put in the front of the embassy of submission. Mr. Eden was taken from the office of Lord Suffolk, to whom he was then under secretary of state; from the office of that Lord Suffolk, who but a few weeks before, in his place in parliament, did not deign to enquire where a Congress of vagrants was to be found. This Lord Suffolk sent Mr. Eden to find these vagrants, without knowing where his King's

Generals were to be found, who were joined in the same commission of supplicating those whom they were sent to subdue. They enter the capital of America only to abandon it; and these assertors and representatives of the dignity of England, at the tail of a flying army, let fly their Parthian shafts of memorials and remonstrances at random behind them. Their promises and their offers, their flatteries and their menaces, were all despised; and we were saved the disgrace of their formal reception, only because the Congress scorned to receive them; whilst the State-house of independent Philadelphia opened her doors to the public entry of the ambassador of France. From war and blood, we went to submission; and from submission plunged back again to war and blood; to desolate and be desolated, without measure, hope, or end. I am a Royalist, I blushed for this degradation of the Crown. I am a Whig, I blushed for the dishonour of Parliament. I am a true Englishman, I felt to the quick for the disgrace of England. I am a Man, I felt for the melancholy reverse of human affairs, in the fall of the first power in the world.

To read what was approaching in Ireland, in the black and bloody characters of the American war, was a painful; but it was a necessary part of my public duty. For, Gentlemen, it is not your fond desires or mine that can alter the nature of things, by contending against which what have we got, or shall ever get, but defeat and

and shame? I did not obey your instructions: No. I conformed to the instructions of truth and nature, and maintained your interest, against your opinions, with a constancy that became me. A representative worthy of you, ought to be a person of stability. I am to look, indeed, to your opinions; but to such opinions as you and I *must* have five years hence. I was not to look to the *fash* of the day. I knew that you chose me, in my place, along with others, to be a pillar of the state; and not a weathercock on the top of the edifice, exalted for my levity and versatility, and of no use but to indicate the *shiftings* of every fashionable gale. Would to God, the value of my sentiments on Ireland and on America had been at this day a subject of doubt and discussion! No matter what my sufferings had been, so that this kingdom had kept the authority I wished it to maintain, by a grave foresight, and by an equitable temperance in the use of its power.

The next article of charge on my public conduct, and that which I find rather the most prevalent of all, is Lord Beauchamp's bill. I mean his bill of last session, for reforming the law-process concerning imprisonment. It is said, to aggravate the offence, that I treated the petition of this city with contempt even in presenting it to the House, and expressed myself in terms of marked disrespect. Had this latter part of the charge been true, no merits on the side of the question which I took, could possibly excuse

me. But I am incapable of treating this city with disrespect. Very fortunately, at this minute (if my bad eyesight does not deceive me) \* the worthy gentleman deputed on this business stands directly before me. To him I appeal, whether I did not, though it militated with my oldest and my most recent public opinions, deliver the petition with a strong, and more than usual recommendation to the consideration of the House, on account of the character and consequence of those who signed it. I believe the worthy gentleman will tell you, that the very day I received it, I applied to the Solicitor, now the Attorney General, to give it an immediate consideration; and he most obligingly and instantly consented to employ a great deal of his very valuable time, to write an explanation of the bill. I attended the Committee with all possible care and diligence, in order that every objection of yours might meet with a solution; or produce an alteration. I entreated your learned Recorder (always ready in business in which you take a concern) to attend. But what will you say to those who blame me for supporting Lord Beauchamp's bill, as a disrespectful treatment of your petition, when you hear, that out of respect to you, I myself was the cause of the loss of that very bill? for the noble Lord who brought it in, and who, I must say, has much merit for this and some other measures, at my request consented to put it off for a week, which the Speaker's illness lengthened to a fortnight; and then the frantic tumult about Popery,

\* Mr. Williams.

drove

drove that and every rational business from the House. So that if I chose to make a defence of myself, on the little principles of a culprit, pleading in his exculpation, I might not only secure my acquittal, but make merit with the opposers of the bill. But I shall do no such thing. The truth is, that I did occasion the loss of the bill, and by a delay caused by my respect to you. But such an event was never in my contemplation. And I am so far from taking credit for the defeat of that measure, that I cannot sufficiently lament my misfortune, if but one man, who ought to be at large, has passed a year in prison by my means. I am a debtor to the debtors. I confess judgment. I owe, what, if ever it be in my power, I shall most certainly pay,—ample atonement, and usurious amends to liberty and humanity for my unhappy lapse. For, Gentlemen, Lord Beauchamp's bill was a law of justice and policy, as far as it went; I say as far as it went, for its fault was its being, in the remedial part, miserably defective.

There are two capital faults in our law with relation to civil debts. One is, that every man is presumed solvent. A presumption, in innumerable cases, directly against truth. Therefore the debtor is ordered, on a supposition of ability and fraud, to be coerced his liberty until he makes payment. By this means, in all cases of civil insolvency, without a pardon from his creditor, he is to be imprisoned for life:—and thus a

miserable mistaken invention of artificial science, operates to change a civil into a criminal judgment, and to scourge misfortune or indiscretion with a punishment which the law does not inflict on the greatest crimes,

The next fault is, that the inflicting of that punishment is not on the opinion of an equal and public judge, but is referred to the arbitrary discretion of a private, nay interested, and irritated, individual. He, who formally is, and substantially ought to be, the judge, is in reality no more than ministerial, a mere executive instrument of a private man, who is at once judge and party. Every idea of judicial order is subverted by this procedure. If the insolvency be no crime, why is it punished with arbitrary imprisonment? If it be a crime, why is it delivered into private hands to pardon without discretion, or to punish without mercy and without measure?

To these faults, gross and cruel faults in our law, the excellent principle of Lord Beauchamp's bill applied some sort of remedy. I know that credit must be preserved; but equity must be preserved too; and it is impossible, that any thing should be necessary to commerce, which is inconsistent with justice. The principle of credit was not weakened by that bill. God forbid! The enforcement of that credit was only put into the same public judicial hands on which we depend for our lives, and all that makes life dear to us. But, indeed, this business was taken

up

up too warmly both here and elsewhere. The bill was extremely mistaken. It was supposed to enact what it never enacted; and complaints were made of clauses in it as novelties, which existed before the noble Lord that brought in the bill was born. There was a fallacy that run through the whole of the objections. The gentlemen who opposed the bill, always argued, as if the option lay between that bill and the antient law.—But this is a grand mistake. For practically, the option is between, not that bill and the old law, but between that bill and those occasional laws called acts of grace. For the operation of the old law is so savage, and so inconvenient to society, that for a long time past, once in every parliament, and lately twice, the legislature has been obliged to make a general arbitrary jail-delivery, and at once to set open, by its sovereign authority, all the prisons in England.

Gentlemen, I never relished acts of grace; nor ever submitted to them but from despair of better. They are a dishonourable invention, by which, not from humanity, not from policy, but merely because we have not room enough to hold these victims of the absurdity of our laws, we turn loose upon the public three or four thousand naked wretches, corrupted by the habits, debased by the ignominy of a prison. If the creditor had a right to those carcases as a natural security for his property, I am sure we have no right to deprive him of that security.

But if the few pounds of flesh were not necessary to his security, we had not a right to detain the unfortunate debtor, without any benefit at all to the person who confined him.—Take it as you will, we commit injustice. Now Lord Beauchamp's bill intended to do deliberately, and with great caution and circumspection, upon each several case, and with all attention to the just claimant, what acts of grace do in a much greater measure, and with very little care, caution, or deliberation.

I suspect that here too, if we contrive to oppose this bill, we shall be found in a struggle against the nature of things. For as we grow enlightened, the public will not bear, for any length of time, to pay for the maintenance of whole armies of prisoners; nor, at their own expence, submit to keep jails as a sort of garrisons, merely to fortify the absurd principle of making men judges in their own cause. For credit has little or no concern in this cruelty. I speak in a commercial assembly. You know that credit is given, because capital ~~may~~ be employed; that men calculate the chances of insolvency; and they either withhold the credit, or make the debtor pay the risque in the price. The counting-house has no alliance with the jail. Holland understands trade as well as we, and she has done much more than this obnoxious bill intended to do. There was not, when Mr. Howard visited Holland, more than one prisoner for debt in the great city of Rotterdam. Although  
Lord

Lord Beauchamp's act (which was previous to this bill, and intended to feel the way for it) has already preserved liberty to thousands; and though it is not three years since the last act of grace passed, yet by Mr. Howard's last account, there were near three thousand again in jail. I cannot name this gentleman without remarking, that his labours and writings have done much to open the eyes and hearts of mankind. He has visited all Europe,—not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art; not to collect medals, or collate manuscripts:—but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gage and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan is original; and it is as full of genius as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery, a circumnavigation of charity. Already the benefit of his labour is felt more or less in every country: I hope he will anticipate his final reward, by seeing all its effects fully realized in his own. He will receive, not by retail but in gross, the reward of those who visit the prisoner; and he has so forestalled and monopolized this branch of charity, that there will be, I trust,

trust, little room to merit by such acts of benevolence hereafter.

Nothing remains now to trouble you with; but the fourth charge against me—the business of the Roman Catholics. It is a business closely connected with the rest. They are all on one and the same principle. My little scheme of conduct, such as it is, is all arranged. I could do nothing but what I have done on this subject, without confounding the whole train of my ideas, and disturbing the whole order of my life. Gentlemen, I ought to apologise to you, for seeming to think any thing at all necessary to be said upon this matter. The calumny is fitter to be scrawled with the midnight chalk of incendiaries, with "No Popery," on walls and doors of devoted houses, than to be mentioned in any civilised company. I had heard, that the spirit of discontent on that subject was very prevalent here. With pleasure I find that I have been grossly misinformed. If it exists at all in this city, the laws have crushed its exertions, and our morals have shamed its appearance in day-light. I have pursued this spirit where-ever I could trace it; but it still fled from me. It was a ghost, which all had heard of, but none had seen. None would acknowledge that he thought the public proceeding with regard to our Catholic dissenters to be blameable; but several were sorry it had made an ill impression upon others, and that my interest was hurt by my share in the business. I find with satisfaction and pride, that not

not above four or five in this city (and I dare say these misled by some gross misrepresentation) have signed that symbol of delusion and bond of sedition, that libel on the national religion and English character, the Protestant Association. It is therefore, Gentlemen, not by way of cure but of prevention, and lest the arts of wicked men may prevail over the integrity of any one amongst us, that I think it necessary to open to you the merits of this transaction pretty much at large; and I beg your patience upon it; for, although the reasonings that have been used to depreciate the act are of little force, and though the authority of the men concerned in this ill design is not very imposing, yet the audaciousness of these conspirators against the national honour, and the extensive wickedness of their attempts, have raised persons of little importance to a degree of evil eminence, and imparted a sort of sinister dignity to proceedings that had their origin in only the meanest and blindest malice.

In explaining to you the proceedings of Parliament which have been complained of, I will state to you,—first, the thing that was done;—next, the persons who did it;—and lastly, the grounds and reasons upon which the legislature proceeded in this deliberate act of public justice and public prudence.

Gentlemen, The condition of our nature is such, that we buy our blessings at a price. The Reformation, one of the greatest periods of human improvement, was a time of trouble and confusion.

confusion. The vast structure of superstition and tyranny, which had been for ages in rearing, and which was combined with the interest of the great and of the many; which was moulded into the laws, the manners, and civil institutions of nations, and blended with the frame and policy of states; could not be brought to the ground without a fearful struggle; nor could it fall without a violent concussion of itself and all about it. When this great revolution was attempted in a more regular mode by government, it was opposed by plots and seditions of the people; when by popular efforts, it was repressed as rebellion by the hand of power; and bloody executions (often bloodily returned) marked the whole of its progress through all its stages. The affairs of religion, which are no longer heard of in the tumult of our present contention, made a principal ingredient in the wars and politics of that time; the enthusiasm of religion threw a gloom over the politics; and political interests poisoned and perverted the spirit of religion upon all sides. The Protestant religion in that violent struggle, infected, as the Popish had been before, by worldly interests and worldly passions, became a persecutor in its turn, sometimes of the new sects, which carried their own principles further than it was convenient to the original reformers; and always of the body from whom they parted; and this persecuting spirit arose, not only, from the bitterness of retaliation, but from the merciless policy of fear.

It was long before the spirit of true piety and true wisdom, involved in the principles of the Reformation, could be depurated from the dregs and sequence of the contention with which it was carried through. However, until this be done, the Reformation is not complete, and those who think themselves good Protestants, from their animosity to others, are in that respect no Protestants at all. It was at first thought necessary, perhaps, to oppose to Popery another Popery, to get the better of it. Whatever was the cause, laws were made in many countries, and in this kingdom in particular, against Papists, which are as bloody as any of those which had been enacted by the Popish princes and states, and where those laws were not bloody, in my opinion, they were worse, as they were slow, cruel outrages on our nature, and kept men alive only to rot in their persons, every one of the rights and laws of humanity. I pass these statutes, because I would spare your pious ears the repetition of such shocking things; and I come to that particular law, the repeal of which has produced so many unnatural and unexpected consequences.

A statute was fabricated in the year 1699, by which the saying mass (a church-service in the Latin tongue, not exactly the same as our Liturgy, but very near it, and containing no offence whatsoever against the laws, or against good morals) was forged into a crime punishable with perpetual imprisonment. The teaching school, an useful and virtuous occupation, even

even the teaching in a private family, was in every Catholic subjected to the same unproportioned punishment. Your industry, and the bread of your children, was taxed for a pecuniary reward to stimulate avarice to do what nature refused, to inform and prosecute on this law. Every Roman Catholic was, under the same act, to forfeit his estate to his nearest Protestant relation, until, through a profession of what he did not believe, he redeemed, by his hypocrisy, what the law had transferred to the kinsman as the recompence of his profligacy. When thus turned out of doors from his paternal estate, he was disabled from acquiring any other by any industry, donation, or charity, but was rendered a foreigner in his native land, only because he retained the religion, along with the property, handed down to him from those who had been the old inhabitants of that land before him.

Does any one who hears me approve this scheme of things, or think there is common justice, common sense, or common honesty in any part of it? If any does, let him say it, and I am ready to discuss the point with temper and candour. But instead of approving, I perceive a virtuous indignation beginning to rise in your minds on the mere cold stating of the statute.

But what will you feel, when you know from history how this statute passed, and what were the motives, and what the mode of making it?

A party in this nation, enemies to the system of

the Revolution, were in opposition to the government of King William. They knew, that our glorious deliverer was an enemy to all persecution. They knew that he came to free us from slavery and Popery, out of a country, where a third of the people are contented Catholics under a Protestant government. He came with a part of his army composed of those very Catholics, to overthrow the power of a Popish prince. Such is the effect of a tolerating spirit, and so much is liberty served in every way, and by all persons, by a manly adherence to its own principles. Whilst freedom is true to itself, every thing becomes subject to it, and its very adversaries are an instrument in its hands.

The party I speak of (like some amongst us who would disparage the best friends of their country) resolved to make the King either violate his principles of toleration, or incur the odium of protecting Papists. They therefore brought in this bill, and made it purposely wicked and absurd that it might be rejected. The then court-party, discovering their game, turned the tables on them, and returned their bill to them stuffed with still greater absurdities, that its loss might lie upon its original authors. They, finding their own ball thrown back to them, kicked it back again to their adversaries. And thus this act, loaded with the double injustice of two parties, neither of whom intended to pass, what they hoped the other would be persuaded to reject,

went through the legislature, contrary to the real wish of all parts of it, and of all the parties that composed it. In this manner these insolent and profligate factions, as if they were playing with balls and counters, made a sport of the fortunes and the liberties of their fellow-creatures. Other acts of persecution have been acts of malice. This was a subversion of justice from wantonness and petulance. Look into the history of Bishop Burnet. He is a witness without exception.

The effects of the act have been as mischievous, as its origin was ludicrous and shameful. From that time every person of that communion, lay and ecclesiastic, has been obliged to fly from the face of day. The clergy, concealed in garrets of private houses, or obliged to take a shelter (hardly safe to themselves, but infinitely dangerous to their country) under the privileges of foreign ministers, officiated as their servants, and under their protection. The whole body of the Catholics, condemned to beggary and to ignorance in their native land, have been obliged to learn the principles of letters, at the hazard of all their other principles, from the charity of your enemies. They have been taxed to their ruin at the pleasure of necessitous and profligate relations, and according to the measure of their necessity and profligacy. Examples of this are many and affecting. Some of them are known by a friend who stands near me in this hall. It is but six or seven years since a clergyman of the name of Malony, a

man of morals, neither guilty nor accused of any thing noxious to the state, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment for exercising the functions of his religion; and after lying in jail two or three years, was relieved by the mercy of government from perpetual imprisonment, on condition of perpetual banishment. A brother of the Earl of Shrewsbury, a Talbot, a name respectable in this county, whilst its glory is any part of its concern, was hauled to the bar of the Old Bailey among common felons, and only escaped the same doom, either by some error in the process, or that the wretch who brought him there could not correctly describe his person; I now forget which.—In short, the persecution would never have relented for a moment, if the judges, superseding (though with an ambiguous example) the strict rule of their artificial duty by the higher obligation of their conscience, did not constantly throw every difficulty in the way of such informers. But so ineffectual is the power of legal evasion against legal iniquity, that it was but the other day, that a lady of condition, beyond the middle of life, was on the point of being stripped of her whole fortune by a near relation, to whom she had been a friend and benefactor: and she must have been totally ruined, without a power of redress or mitigation from the courts of law, had not the legislature itself rushed in, and by a special act of Parliament rescued her from the injustice of its own statutes. One of the acts authorising such things

was that which we in part repealed, knowing what our duty was, and doing that duty as men of honour and virtue, as good Protestants, and as good citizens. Let him stand forth that disapproves what we have done!

Gentlemen, Bad laws are the worst sort of tyranny. In such a country as this, they are of all bad things the worst, worse by far than any where else; and they derive a particular malignity even from the wisdom and soundness of the rest of our institutions. For very obvious reasons you cannot trust the Crown with a dispensing power over any of your laws. However, a government, be it as bad as it may, will, in the exercise of a discretionary power, discriminate times and persons; and will not ordinarily pursue any man, when its own safety is not concerned. A mercenary informer knows no distinction. Under such a system, the obnoxious people are slaves, not only to the government, but they live at the mercy of every individual; they are at once the slaves of the whole community, and of every part of it; and the worst and most unmerciful men are those on whose goodness they most depend.

In this situation men not only shrink from the frowns of a stern magistrate, but they are obliged to fly from their very species. The seeds of destruction are sown in civil intercourse, in social habitudes. The blood of wholesome kindred is infected. Their tables and beds are surrounded with snares. All the means given by Providence to make life safe and comfortable, are

are perverted into instruments of terror and torment. This species of universal subserviency, that makes the very servant who waits behind your chair, the arbiter of your life and fortune, has such a tendency to degrade and abase mankind, and to deprive them of that assured and liberal state of mind, which alone can make us what we ought to be, that I vow to God I would sooner bring myself to put a man to immediate death for opinions I disliked, and so to get rid of the man and his opinions at once, than to fret him with a feverish being, tainted with the jail-distemper of a contagious servitude, to keep him above ground, an animated mass of putrefaction, corrupted himself, and corrupting all about him.

The act repealed was of this direct tendency; and it was made in the manner which I have related to you. I will now tell you by whom the bill of repeal was brought into Parliament. I find it has been industriously given out in this city (from kindness to me unquestionably) that I was the mover or the seconder. The fact is, I did not once open my lips on the subject during the whole progress of the bill. I do not say this as disclaiming my share in that measure. Very far from it. I inform you of this fact, lest I should seem to arrogate to myself the merits which belong to others. To have been the man chosen out to redeem our fellow-citizens from slavery; to purify our laws from absurdity and injustice; and to cleanse our religion from the

blot and stain of persecution, would be an honour and happiness to which my wishes would undoubtedly aspire; but to which nothing but my wishes could possibly have entitled me. That great work was in hands in every respect far better qualified than mine. The mover of the bill was Sir George Savile.

When an act of great and signal humanity was to be done, and done with all the weight and authority that belonged to it, the world could cast its eyes upon none but him. I hope that few things, which have a tendency to bless or to adorn life, have wholly escaped my observation in my passage through it. I have sought the acquaintance of that gentleman, and have seen him in all situations. He is a true genius; with an understanding vigorous, and acute, and refined, and distinguishing even to excess; and illuminated with a most unbounded, peculiar, and original cast of imagination. With these he possesses many external and instrumental advantages; and he makes use of them all. His fortune is among the largest; a fortune which, wholly unincumbered, as it is, with one single charge from luxury, vanity, or excess, sinks under the benevolence of its dispenser. This private benevolence, expanding itself into patriotism, renders his whole being the estate of the public, in which he has not reserved a *peculium* for himself of profit, diversion, or relaxation. During the session, the first in, and the last out of the House of Commons; he passes from the senate to the camp; and,

and, seldom seeing the seat of his ancestors, he is always in Parliament to serve his country, or in the field to defend it. But in all well-wrought compositions, some particulars stand out more eminently than the rest; and the things which will carry his name to posterity, are his two bills, I mean that for a limitation of the claims of the crown upon landed estates, and this for the relief of the Roman Catholics. By the former, he has emancipated property; by the latter, he has quieted conscience; and by both, he has taught that grand lesson to government and subject,—no longer to regard each other as adverse parties.

Such was the mover of the act that is complained of by men, who are not quite so good as he is; an act, most assuredly not brought in by him from any partiality to that sect which is the object of it. For, among his faults, I really cannot help reckoning a greater degree of prejudice against that people, than becomes so wise a man. I know that he inclines to a sort of disgust, mixed with a considerable degree of asperity, to the system; and he has few, or rather no habits with any of its professors. What he has done was on quite other motives. The motives were these, which he declared in his excellent speech on his motion for the bill, namely, his extreme zeal to the Protestant religion, which he thought utterly disgraced by the act of 1699; and his rooted hatred to all kind of oppression, under any colour or upon any pretence whatsoever.

The seconder was worthy of the mover, and the motion. I was not the seconder; it was Mr. Dunning, Recorder of this city. I shall say the less of him, because his near relation to you makes you more particularly acquainted with his merits. But I should appear little acquainted with them, or little sensible of them, if I could utter his name on this occasion without expressing my esteem for his character. I am not afraid of offending a most learned body, and most jealous of its reputation for that learning, when I say he is the first of his profession. It is a point settled by those who settle every thing else; and I must add (what I am enabled to say from my own long and close observation) that there is not a man, of any profession, or in any situation, of a more erect and independent spirit; of a more proud honour; a more manly mind; a more firm and determined integrity. Assure yourselves, that the names of two such men will bear a great load of prejudice in the other scale, before they can be entirely outweighed.

With this mover, and this seconder, agreed the *whole* House of Commons; the *whole* House of Lords; the *whole* Bench of Bishops; the King; the Ministry; the Opposition; all the distinguished Clergy of the Establishment; all the eminent lights (for they were consulted) of the Dissenting churches. This according voice of national wisdom ought to be listened to with reverence. To say that all these descriptions of Englishmen unanimously concurred in a scheme for introducing

introducing the Catholic religion, or that none of them understood the nature and effects of what they were doing, so well as a few obscure clubs of people, whose names you never heard of, is shamelessly absurd. Surely it is paying a miserable compliment to the religion we profess, to suggest, that every thing eminent in the kingdom is indifferent, or even adverse to that religion, and that its security is wholly abandoned to the zeal of those, who have nothing but their zeal to distinguish them. In weighing this unanimous concurrence of whatever the nation has to boast of, I hope you will recollect, that all these concurring parties do by no means love one another enough to agree in any point, which was not both evidently, and importantly, right.

To prove this, to prove, that the measure was both clearly and materially proper, I will next lay before you (as I promised) the political grounds and reasons for the repeal of that penal statute; and the motives to its repeal at that particular time.

Gentlemen, America———When the English nation seemed to be dangerously, if not irrecoverably divided; when one, and that the most growing branch, was torn from the parent stock, and ingrafted on the power of France, a great terror fell upon this kingdom. On a sudden we awakened from our dreams of conquest, and saw ourselves threatened with an immediate invasion, which we were, at that time, very ill prepared to resist. You remember the cloud that gloomed

over us all. . . . hour of our dismay, from the bottom of the hiding-places, into which the indiscriminate rigour of our statutes had driven them, came out the body of the Roman Catholics. They appeared before the steps of a tottering throne, with one of the most sober, measured, steady, and dutiful addresses, that was ever presented to the crown. It was no holiday ceremony; no anniversary compliment of parade and show. It was signed by almost every gentleman of that persuasion, of note or property, in England. At such a crisis, nothing but a decided resolution to stand or fall with their country could have dictated such an address; the direct tendency of which was to cut off all retreat; and to render them peculiarly obnoxious to an invader of their own communion. The address shewed, what I long languished to see, that all the subjects of England had cast off all foreign views and connexions, and that every man looked for his relief from every grievance, at the hands only of his own natural government.

It was necessary, on our part, that the natural government should shew itself worthy of that name. It was necessary, at the crisis I speak of, that the supreme power of the state should meet the conciliatory dispositions of the subject. To delay protection would be to reject allegiance. And why should it be rejected, or even coldly and suspiciously received? If any independent Catholic state should choose to take part with this kingdom in a war with France and Spain, that bigot (if such a bigot could be, found) would

would be heard with little respect, who could dream of objecting his religion to an ally, whom the nation would not only receive with its freest thanks, but purchase, with the last remains of its exhausted treasure. To such an ally we should not dare to whisper a single syllable of those base and invidious topics, upon which, some unhappy men would persuade the state, to reject the duty and allegiance of its own members. Is it then, because foreigners are in a condition to set our malice at defiance, that with *them*, we are willing to contract engagements of friendship, and to keep them with fidelity and honour; but that, because we conceive, some descriptions of our countrymen are not powerful enough to punish our malignity, we will not permit them to support our common interest? Is it on that ground, that our anger is to be kindled by their offered kindness? Is it on that ground, that they are to be subjected to penalties, because they are willing, by actual merit, to purge themselves from imputed crimes? Lest by an adherence to the cause of their country they should acquire a title to fair and equitable treatment, are we resolved to furnish them with causes of eternal enmity; and rather supply them with just and founded motives to disaffection, than not to have that disaffection in existence to justify an oppression, which, not from policy but disposition, we have pre-determined to exercise?

What shadow of reason could be assigned, why, at a time, when the most Protestant part of this

this Protestant empire found it for its advantage to unite with the two principal Popish states, to unite itself in the closest bonds with France and Spain, for our destruction, that we should refuse to unite with our own Catholic countrymen for our own preservation? Ought we, like madmen, to tear off the plaisters, that the lenient hand of prudence had spread over the wounds and gashes, which in our delirium of ambition we had given to our own body? No person ever reprobated the American war more than I did, and do, and ever shall. But I never will consent that we should lay additional voluntary penalties on ourselves, for a fault which carries but too much of its own punishment in its own nature. For one, I was delighted with the proposal of internal peace. I accepted the blessing with thankfulness and transport; I was truly happy, to find ~~an~~ good effect of our civil distractions, that they had put an end to all religious strife and heart-burning in our own bowels. What must be the sentiments of a man, who could wish to perpetuate domestic hostility, when the causes of dispute are at an end; and who, crying out for peace with one part of the nation on the most humiliating terms, should deny it to those, who offer friendship without any terms at all?

But if I was unable to reconcile such a denial to the contracted principles of local duty, what answer could I give to the broad claims of general humanity? I confess to you freely, that the sufferings and distresses of the people of America

America in this cruel war, have at times affected me more deeply than I can express. I felt every Gazette of triumph as a blow upon my heart, which has an hundred times sunk and fainted within me at all the mischiefs brought upon those who bear the whole brunt of war in the heart of their country. Yet the Americans are utter strangers to me; a nation, among whom I am not sure, that I have a single acquaintance. Was I to suffer my mind to be so unaccountably warped; was I to keep such iniquitous weights and measures of temper and of reason, as to sympathize with those who are in open rebellion against an authority which I respect, at war with a country which by every title ought to be, and is most dear to me; and yet to have no feeling at all for the hardships and indignities suffered by men, who, by their very vicinity, are bound up in a nearer relation to us; who contribute their share, and more than their share, to the common prosperity; who perform the common offices of social life, and who obey the laws to the full as well as I do? Gentlemen, the danger to the state being out of the question (of which, let me tell you, statesmen themselves are apt to have but too exquisite a sense) I could assign no other reason of justice, policy, or feeling, for not concurring most cordially, as most cordially I did concur, in softening some part of that shameful servitude, under which several of my worthy fellow-citizens were groaning.

Important effects followed this act of wisdom. They appeared at home and abroad, to the great benefit

benefit of this kingdom; and, let me hope, to the advantage of mankind at large. It betokened union among ourselves. It shewed soundness, even on the part of the persecuted, which generally is the weak side of every community. But its most essential operation was not in England. The act was immediately, though very imperfectly, copied in Ireland; and this imperfect transcript of an imperfect act, this first faint sketch of toleration, which did little more than disclose a principle, and mark out a disposition, completed in a most wonderful manner the re-union to the state, of all the Catholics of that country. It made us, what we ought always to have been, one family, one body, one heart and soul, against the family-combination, and all other combinations of our enemies. We have indeed obligations to that people, who received such small benefits with so much gratitude; and for which gratitude and attachment to us, I am afraid they have suffered not a little in other places.

I dare say, you have all heard of the privileges indulged to the Irish Catholics residing in Spain. You have likewise heard with what circumstances of severity they have been lately expelled from the sea-ports of that kingdom; driven into the inland cities; and there detained as a sort of prisoners of state. I have good reason to believe, that it was the zeal to our government and our cause, (somewhat indiscreetly expressed in one of the addresses of the Catholics of Ireland) which has thus drawn down on their

their heads the indignation of the Court of Madrid; to the inexpressible loss of several individuals, and in future, perhaps, to the great detriment of the whole of their body. Now that our people should be persecuted in Spain for their attachment to this country, and persecuted in this country for their supposed enmity to us, is such a jarring reconciliation of contradictory distresses, is a thing at once so dreadful and ridiculous, that no malice short of diabolical, would wish to continue any human creatures in such a situation. But honest men will not forget either their merit or their sufferings. There are men, (and many, I trust, there are) who, out of love to their country and their kind, would torture their invention to find excuses for the mistakes of their brethren; and who, to stifle dissension, would construe, even doubtful appearances, with the utmost favour: such men will never persuade themselves to be ingenious and refined in discovering disaffection and treason in the manifest palpable signs of suffering loyalty. Persecution is so unnatural to them, that they gladly snatch the very first opportunity of laying aside all the tricks and devices of penal politics; and of returning home, after all their irksome and vexatious wanderings, to our natural family mansion, to the grand social principle, that unites all men, in all descriptions, under the shadow of an equal and impartial justice.

Men of another sort, I mean the bigoted enemies to liberty, may, perhaps, in their politics, make no account of the good or ill affection of the

the Catholics of England, who are but an handful of people (enough to torment, but not enough to fear) perhaps not so many, of both sexes and of all ages, as fifty thousand. But, Gentlemen, it is possible you may not know, that the people of that persuasion in Ireland, amount at least to sixteen or seventeen hundred thousand souls. I do not at all exaggerate the number. A nation to be persecuted! Whilst we were masters of the sea, embodied with America, and in alliance with half the powers of the continent, we might perhaps, in that remote corner of Europe, afford to tyrannise with impunity. But there is a revolution in our affairs, which makes it prudent to be just. In our late awkward contest with Ireland about trade, had religion been thrown in, to ferment and embitter the mass of discontents, the consequences might have been truly dreadful. But very happily, that cause of quarrel was previously quieted by the wisdom of the acts I am commending.

Even in England, where I admit the danger from the discontent of that persuasion to be less than in Ireland; yet even here, had we listened to the counsels of Fanaticism and Folly, we might have wounded ourselves very deeply, and wounded ourselves in a very tender part. You are apprised, that the Catholics of England consist mostly of your best manufacturers. Had the legislature chosen, instead of returning their declarations of duty with correspondent good-will, to drive them to despair, there is a country at their very door,

to

to which they would be invited; a country in all respects as good as ours, and with the finest cities in the world ready built to receive them. And thus the bigotry of a free country, and in an enlightened age, would have repeopled the cities of Flanders, which, in the darkness of two hundred years ago, had been desolated by the superstition of a cruel tyrant. Our manufactures were the growth of the persecutions in the Low Countries. What a spectacle would it be to Europe, to see us at this time of day, balancing the account of tyranny with those very countries, and by our persecutions, driving back Trade and Manufacture, as a sort of vagabonds, to their original settlement! But I trust we shall be saved this last of disgraces.

So far as to the effect of the act on the interests of this nation. With regard to the interests of mankind at large, I am sure the benefit was very considerable. Long before this act, indeed, the spirit of toleration began to gain ground in Europe. In Holland, the third part of the people are Catholics; they live at ease; and are a sound part of the state. In many parts of Germany, Protestants and Papists partake the same cities, the same councils, and even the same churches. The unbounded liberality of the king of Prussia's conduct on this occasion is known to all the world; and it is of a piece with the other grand maxims of his reign. The magnanimity of the Imperial Court, breaking through the narrow principles of its predecessors, has indulged its Protestant

Protestant subjects, not only with property, with worship, with liberal education, but with honours and trusts, both civil and military. A worthy Protestant gentleman of this country now fills, and fills with credit, an high office in the Austrian Netherlands. Even the Lutheran obstinacy of Sweden has thawed at length, and opened a toleration to all religions. I know myself, that in France the Protestants begin to be at rest. The army, which in that country is every thing, is open to them; and some of the military rewards and decorations which the laws deny, are supplied by others, to make the service acceptable and honourable. The first minister of finance in that country, is a Protestant. Two years war without a tax, is among the first-fruits of their liberality. Tarnished as the glory of this nation is, and far as it has waded into the shades of an eclipse, some beams of its former illumination still play upon its surface; and what is done in England is still looked to, as argument, and as example. It is certainly true, that no law of this country ever met with such universal applause abroad, or was so likely to produce the perfection of that tolerating spirit, which, as I observed, has been long gaining ground in Europe; for abroad, it was universally thought that we had done, what, I am sorry to say, we had not; they thought we had granted a full toleration. That opinion was however so far from hurting the Protestant cause, that I declare, with the most serious solemnity, my firm belief, that no one thing done for these

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fifty years past, was so likely to prove deeply beneficial to our religion at large as Sir George Savile's act. In its effects it was, "an act for tolerating and protecting Protestantism throughout Europe:" and I hope, that those who were taking steps for the quiet and settlement of our Protestant brethren in other countries, will even yet, rather consider the steady equity of the greater and better part of the people of Great Britain, than the vanity and violence of a few.

I perceive, Gentlemen, by the manner of all about me, that you look with horror on the wicked clamour which has been raised on this subject; and that instead of an apology for what was done, you rather demand from me an account, why the execution of the scheme of toleration, was not made more answerable to the large and liberal grounds on which it was taken up. The question is natural and proper; and I remember that a great and learned magistrate\*, distinguished for his strong and systematic understanding, and who at that time was a member of the House of Commons, made the same objection to the proceeding. The statutes, as they now stand, are, without doubt, perfectly absurd. But I beg leave to explain the cause of this gross imperfection, in the tolerating plan, as well and as shortly as I am able. It was universally thought, that the session ought not to pass over without doing *something* in this business. To revise the whole body of the penal

\* The Chancellor.

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statutes was conceived to be an object too big for the time. The penal statute therefore which was chosen for repeal (chosen to shew our disposition to conciliate, not to perfect a toleration) was this act of ludicrous cruelty, of which I have just given you the history. It is an act, which, though not by a great deal so fierce and bloody as some of the rest, was infinitely more ready in the execution. It was the act which gave the greatest encouragement to those pests of society, mercenary informers, and interested disturbers of household peace; and it was observed with truth, that the prosecutions, either carried to conviction or compounded, for many years, had been all commenced upon that act. It was said, that whilst we were deliberating on a more perfect scheme, the spirit of the age would never come up to the execution of the statutes which remained; especially as more steps, and a co-operation of more minds and powers, were required towards a mischievous use of them, than for the execution of the act to be repealed: that it was better to unrival this texture from below than from above, beginning with the latest, which, in general practice, is the severest evil. It was alledged, that this slow proceeding would be attended with the advantage of a progressive experience; and that the people would grow reconciled to toleration, when they should find by the effects, that justice was not so irreconcilable an enemy to convenience as they had imagined.

These, Gentlemen, were the reasons why we left this good work in the rude unfinished state, in which

which good works are commonly left, through the tame circumspection with which a timid prudence so frequently enervates beneficence. In doing good, we are generally cold, and languid, and sluggish; and of all things afraid of being too much in the right. But the works of malice and injustice are quite in another style. They are finished with a bold masterly hand; touched as they are with the spirit of those vehement passions that call forth all our energies whenever we oppress and persecute.

Thus this matter was left for the time, with a full determination in Parliament, not to suffer other and worse statutes to remain for the purpose of counteracting the benefits proposed by the repeal of one penal law; for nobody then dreamed of defending what was done as a benefit on the ground of its being no benefit at all. We were not then ripe for so mean a subterfuge.

I do not wish to go over the horrid scene that was afterwards acted. Would to God it could be expunged for ever from the annals of this country! But since it must subsist for our shame, let it subsist for our instruction. In the year 1780 there were found in this nation men deluded enough (for I give the whole to their delusion) on pretences of zeal and piety, without any sort of provocation whatsoever, real or pretended, to make a desperate attempt, which would have consumed all the glory and power of this country in the flames of London; and buried all law, order, and religion, under the ruins of the metropolis of the

Protestant world. Whether all this mischief done, or in the direct train of doing, was in their original scheme, I cannot say; I hope it was not; but this would have been the unavoidable consequence of their proceedings, had not the flames they had lighted up in their fury been extinguished in their blood.

All the time that this horrid scene was acting, or avenging, as well as for some time before, and ever since, the wicked instigators of this unhappy multitude, guilty, with every aggravation, of all their crimes, and screened in a cowardly darkness from their punishment, continued, without interruption, pity, or remorse, to blow up the blind rage of the populace, with a continued blast of pestilential libels, which infected and poisoned the very air we breathed in.

The main drift of all the libels, and all the riots, was, to force Parliament (to persuade us was hopeless) into an act of national perfidy, which has no example. For, Gentlemen, it is proper you should all know what infamy we escaped by refusing that repeal, for a refusal of which, it seems, I, among others, stand somewhere or other accused. When we took away, on the motives which I had the honour of stating to you, a few of the innumerable penalties upon an oppressed and injured people, the relief was not absolute, but given on a stipulation and compact between them and us; for we bound down the Roman Catholics with the most solemn oaths, to bear true allegiance to this government, to abjure all sort of temporal

temporal power in any other; and to renounce, under the same solemn obligations, the doctrines of systematic perfidy, with which they stood (I conceive very unjustly) charged. Now our modest petitioners came up to us, most humbly praying nothing more, than that we should break our faith without any one cause whatsoever of forfeiture assigned; and when the subjects of this kingdom had, on their part, fully performed their engagement, we should refuse, on our part, the benefit we had stipulated on the performance of those very conditions that were prescribed by our own authority, and taken on the sanction of our public faith—That is to say, when we had inveigled them with fair promises within our door, we were to shut it on them; and, adding mockery to outrage—to tell them, “Now we have got you fast—your consciences are bound to a power resolved on your destruction. We have made you swear, that your religion obliges you to keep your faith: fools as you are! we will now let you see, that our religion enjoins us to keep no faith with you.” They who would advisedly call upon us to do such things, must certainly have thought us not only a convention of treacherous tyrants, but a gang of the lowest and dirtiest wretches that ever disgraced humanity. Had we done this, we should have indeed proved, that there were *some* in the world whom no faith could bind; and we should have *convicted* ourselves of that odious principle of which Papists stood *accused* by those very savages,

who wished us, on that accusation, to deliver them over to their fury.

In this audacious tumult, when our very name and character, as gentlemen, was to be cancelled for ever along with the faith and honour of the nation, I, who had exerted myself very little on the quiet passing of the bill, thought it necessary then to come forward. I was not alone; but though some distinguished members on all sides, and particularly on ours, added much to their high reputation by the part they took on that day, (a part which will be remembered as long as honour, spirit, and eloquence have estimation in the world) I may and will value myself so far, that yielding in abilities to many, I yielded in zeal to none. With warmth, and with vigour, and animated with a just and natural indignation, I called forth every faculty that I possessed, and I directed it in every way which I could possibly employ it. I laboured night and day. I laboured in Parliament: I laboured out of Parliament. If therefore the resolution of the House of Commons, refusing to commit this act of unmatched turpitude, be a crime, I am guilty among the foremost. But indeed, whatever the faults of that House may have been, no one member was found hardy enough to propose so infamous a thing; and on full debate we passed the resolution against the petitions with as much unanimity, as we had formerly passed the law of which these petitions demanded the repeal.

There was a circumstance (justice will not suffer  
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me to pass it over) which, if any thing could enforce the reasons I have given, would fully justify the act of relief, and render a repeal, or any thing like a repeal, unnatural, impossible. It was the behaviour of the persecuted Roman Catholics under the acts of violence and brutal insolence, which they suffered. I suppose there are not in London less than four or five thousand of that persuasion from my country, who do a great deal of the most laborious works in the metropolis; and they chiefly inhabit those quarters, which were the principal theatre of the fury of the bigotted multitude. They are known to be men of strong arms, and quick feelings, and more remarkable for a determined resolution, than clear ideas, or much foresight. But though provoked by every thing that can stir the blood of men, their houses and chapels in flames, and with the most atrocious profanations of every thing which they hold sacred before their eyes, not a hand was moved to retaliate, or even to defend. Had a conflict once begun, the rage of their persecutors would have redoubled. Thus fury encreasing by the reverberation of outrages, house being fired for house, and church for chapel, I am convinced, that no power under heaven could have prevented a general conflagration; and at this day London would have been a tale. But I am well informed, and the thing speaks it, that their clergy exerted their whole influence to keep their people in such a state of forbearance and quiet, as, when I look back, fills me with astonishment; but not with astonishment only. Their

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merits on that occasion ought not to be forgotten; nor will they, when Englishmen come to recollect themselves. I am sure it were far more proper to have called them forth, and given them the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, than to have suffered those worthy clergymen, and excellent citizens, to be hunted into holes and corners, whilst we are making low-minded inquisitions into the number of their people; as if a tolerating principle was never to prevail, unless we were very sure that only a few could possibly take advantage of it. But indeed we are not yet well recovered of our fright. Our reason, I trust, will return with our security; and this unfortunate temper will pass over like a cloud.

Gentlemen, I have now laid before you a few of the reasons for taking away the penalties of the act 1699, and for refusing to establish them on the riotous requisition of 1780. Because I would not suffer any thing which may be for your satisfaction to escape, permit me just to touch on the objections urged against our act and our resolves, and intended as a justification of the violence offered to both Houses. "Parliament," they assert, "was too hasty, and they ought, in so essential and alarming a change, to have proceeded with a far greater degree of deliberation." The direct contrary. Parliament was too slow. They took fourscore years to deliberate on the repeal of an act which ought not to have survived a second session. When at length, after a procrastination of near a century, the business was taken up, it proceeded in the most public manner, by  
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the ordinary stages, and as slowly as a law so evidently right as to be resisted by none, would naturally advance. Had it been read three times in one day, we should have shewn only a becoming readiness to recognise by protection the undoubted dutiful behaviour of those whom we had but too long punished for offences of presumption or conjecture. But for what end was that bill to linger beyond the usual period of an unopposed measure? Was it to be delayed until a rabble in Edinburgh should dictate to the Church of England what measure of persecution was fitting for her safety? Was it to be adjourned until a fanatical force could be collected in London, sufficient to frighten us out of all our ideas of policy and justice? Were we to wait for the profound lectures on the reason of state, ecclesiastical and political, which the Protestant Association have since condescended to read to us? Or were we, seven hundred Peers and Commoners, the only persons ignorant of the ribald investives which occupy the place of argument in those remonstrances, which every man of common observation had heard a thousand times over, and a thousand times over had despised? All men had before heard what they have to say, and all men at this day know what they dare to do; and I trust, all honest men are equally influenced by the one, and by the other.

But they tell us, that those our fellow-citizens, whose chains we have a little relaxed, are enemies to liberty and our free constitution.—Not enemies, I presume, to their *own* liberty. And as to the constitution,

constitution, until we give them some share in it, I do not know on what pretence we can examine into their opinions about a business in which they have no interest or concern. But after all, are we equally sure, that they are adverse to our constitution, as that our statutes are hostile and destructive to them? For my part, I have reason to believe, their opinions and inclinations in that respect are various, exactly like those of other men: and if they lean more to the Crown than I, and than many of you think *we* ought, we must remember, that he who aims at another's life, is not to be surpris'd if he flies into any sanctuary that will receive him. The tenderness of the executive power is the natural asylum of those upon whom the laws have declared war; and to complain that men are inclined to favour the means of their own safety, is so absurd, that one forgets the injustice in the ridicule.

I must fairly tell you, that so far as my principles are concerned, (principles, that I hope will only depart with my last breath) that I have no idea of a liberty unconnected with honesty and justice. Nor do I believe, that any good constitutions of government or of freedom, can find it necessary for their security to doom any part of the people to a permanent slavery. Such a constitution of freedom, if such can be, is in effect no more than another name for the tyranny of the strongest faction; and factions in republics have been, and are, full as capable as monarchs, of the most cruel oppression and injustice. It is but too true, that the love, and even the

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the very idea, of genuine liberty, is extremely rare. It is but too true, that there are many, whose whole scheme of freedom, is made up of pride, perverseness, and insolence. They feel themselves in a state of thralldom, they imagine that their souls are cooped and cabbined in, unless they have some man, or some body of men, dependent on their mercy. This desire of having some one below them, descends to those who are the very lowest of all,—and a Protestant cobbler, debased by his poverty, but exalted by his share of the ruling church, feels a pride in knowing it is by his generosity alone, that the peer, whose footman's instep he measures, is able to keep his chaplain from a jail. This disposition is the true source of the passion, which many men in very humble life, have taken to the American war. *Our subjects in America; our colonies; our dependants.* This lust of party-power, is the liberty they hunger and thirst for; and this Syren song of ambition, has charmed ears, that one would have thought were never organised to that sort of music.

This way, of *prescribing the citizens by denominations and general descriptions*, dignified by the name of reason of state, and security for constitutions and commonwealths, is nothing better at bottom, than the miserable invention of an ungenerous ambition, which would fain hold the sacred trust of power, without any of the virtues or any of the energies, that give a title to it; a receipt of policy, made up of a detestable compound of malice, cowardice, and sloth. They would govern  
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men against their will ; but in that government they would be discharged from the exercise of vigilance, providence, and fortitude ; and therefore, that they may sleep on their watch, they consent to take some one division of the society into partnership of the tyranny over the rest. But let government, in what form it may be, comprehend the whole in its justice, and restrain the suspicious by its vigilance ; let it keep watch and ward ; let it discover by its sagacity, and punish by its firmness, all delinquency against its power, whenever delinquency exists in the overt acts ; and then it will be as safe as ever God and nature intended it should be. Crimes are the acts of individuals, and not of denominations ; and therefore arbitrarily to class men under general descriptions, in order to proscribe and punish them in the lump for a presumed delinquency, of which perhaps but a part, perhaps none at all, are guilty, is indeed a compendious method, and saves a world of trouble about proof ; but such a method instead of being law, is an act of unnatural rebellion against the legal dominion of reason and justice ; and this vice, in any constitution that entertains it, at one time or other will certainly bring on its ruin.

We are told that this is not a religious persecution, and its abettors are loud in disclaiming all severities on account of conscience. Very fine indeed ! then let it be so ; they are not persecutors ; they are only tyrants. With all my heart. I am perfectly indifferent concerning the pretexts upon which we torment one another ; or whether it be for the constitution of the Church of England,  
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or for the constitution of the State of England, that people choose to make their fellow-creatures wretched. When we were sent into a place of authority, you that sent us had yourselves but one commission to give. You could give us none to wrong or oppress, or even to suffer any kind of oppression or wrong, on any grounds whatsoever, not on political, as in the affairs of America; not on commercial, as in those of Ireland; not in civil, as in the laws for debt; not in religious, as in the statutes against Protestant or Catholic Dissenters. The diversified but connected fabric of universal justice, is well cramped and bolted together in all its parts; and depend upon it, I never have employed, and I never shall employ, any engine of power which may come into my hands, to wrench it asunder. All shall stand, if I can help it, and all shall stand connected. After all, to complete this work, much remains to be done; much in the East, much in the West. But great as the work is, if our will be ready, our powers are not deficient.

Since you have suffered me to trouble you so much on this subject, permit me, Gentlemen, to detain you a little longer. I am indeed most solicitous to give you perfect satisfaction. I find there are some of a better and softer nature than the persons with whom I have supposed myself in debate, who neither think ill of the act of relief, nor by any means desire the repeal, not accusing but lamenting what was done, on account of the consequences, have frequently expressed their wish, that

that the late act had never been made. Some of this description, and persons of worth, I have met with in this city. They conceive, that the prejudices, whatever they might be, of a large part of the people, ought not to have been shocked; that their opinions ought to have been previously taken, and much attended to; and that thereby the late horrid scenes might have been prevented.

I confess, my notions are widely different; and I never was less sorry for any action of my life. I like the bill the better, on account of the events of all kinds that followed it. It relieved the real sufferers; it strengthened the state; and, by the disorders that ensued, we had clear evidence, that there lurked a temper somewhere, which ought not to be fostered by the laws. No ill consequences whatever could be attributed to the act itself. We knew before-hand, or we were poorly instructed, that toleration is odious to the intolerant; freedom to oppressors; property to robbers; and all kinds and degrees of prosperity to the envious. We knew, that all these kinds of men would gladly gratify their evil dispositions under the sanction of law and religion, if they could: if they could not, yet, to make way to their objects, they would do their utmost to subvert all religion and all law. This we certainly knew. But knowing this, is there any reason, because thieves break in and steal, and thus bring detriment to you, and draw ruin on themselves, that I am to be sorry that you are in possession of shops, and of warehouses, and of

wholesome laws to protect them? Are you to build no houses, because desperate men may pull them down upon their own heads? Or, if a malignant wretch will cut his own throat, because he sees you give alms to the necessitous and deserving; shall his destruction be attributed to your charity, and not to his own deplorable madness? If we repent of our good actions, what, I pray you, is left for our faults and follies? It is not the beneficence of the laws, it is the unnatural temper which beneficence can fret and sour, that is to be lamented. It is this temper which, by all rational means, ought to be sweetened and corrected. If froward men should refuse this cure, can they vitiate any thing but themselves? Does evil so react upon good, as not only to retard its motion, but to change its nature? If it can so operate, then good men will always be in the power of the bad; and virtue, by a dreadful reverse of order, must lie under perpetual subjection and bondage to vice.

As to the opinion of the people, which some think, in such cases, is to be implicitly obeyed; near two years tranquillity, which followed the act, and its instant imitation in Ireland, proved abundantly, that the late horrible spirit was, in a great measure, the effect of insidious art, and perverse industry, and gross misrepresentation. But suppose that the dislike had been much more deliberate, and much more general than I am persuaded it was—When we know, that the opinions of even the greatest multitudes, are the standard of rectitude, I shall think myself obliged to make those opinions the

the masters of my conscience. But if it may be doubted whether Omnipotence itself is competent to alter the essential constitution of right and wrong, sure I am, that such *things*, as they and I, are possessed of no such power. No man carries further than I do the policy of making government pleasing to the people. But the widest range of this politic complaisance is confined within the limits of justice. I would not only consult the interest of the people, but I would chearfully gratify their humours. We are all a sort of children, that must be soothed and managed. I think I am not austere or formal in my nature. I would bear, I would even myself play my part in, any innocent buffooneries, to divert them. But I never will act the tyrant for their amusement. If they will mix malice in their sports, I shall never consent to throw them any living, sentient, creature whatsoever, no not so much as a kitling, to torment.

"But if I profess all this impolitic stubbornness, I may chance never to be elected into Parliament." It is certainly not pleasing to be put out of the public service. But I wish to be a member of Parliament, to have my share of doing good, and resisting evil. It would therefore be absurd to renounce my objects, in order to obtain my seat. I deceive myself indeed most grossly, if I had not much rather pass the remainder of my life hidden in the recesses of the deepest obscurity, feeding my mind even with the visions and imaginations of such things, than to be placed on the most splendid throne

throne of the universe, tantalized with a denial of the practice of all which can make the greatest situation any other than the greatest curse. Gentlemen, I have had my day. I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to you, for having set me in a place, wherein I could lend the slightest help to great and laudable designs. If I have had my share, in any measure giving quiet to private property, and private conscience, if by my vote I have aided in securing to families the best possession, peace, if I have joined in reconciling kings to their subjects, and subjects to their prince, if I have assisted to loosen the foreign holdings of the citizen, and taught him to look for his protection to the laws of his country, and for his comfort to the goodwill of his countrymen;—if I have thus taken my part with the best of men in the best of their actions, I can shut the book;—I might wish to read a page or two more—but this is enough for my measure.—I have not lived in vain.

And now, Gentlemen, on this serious day, when I come, as it were, to make up my account with you, let me take to myself some degree of honest pride on the nature of the charges that are against me. I do not here stand before you accused of venality, or of neglect of duty. It is not said, that, in the long period of my service, I have, in a single instance, sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition, or to my fortune. It is not alledged, that to gratify any anger, or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any

any description of men, or any one man in any description. No! the charges against me, are all of one kind, that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant, and further than the opinions of many would go along with me. In every accident which may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress— I will call to mind this accusation; and be comforted.

Gentlemen, I submit the whole to your judgment. Mr. Mayor, I thank you for the trouble you have taken on this occasion. In your state of health, it is particularly obliging. If this company should think it advisable for me to withdraw, I shall respectfully retire; if you think otherwise, I shall go directly to the Council-house and to the Change, and without a moment's delay, begin my canvass.

THE END.

*Bristol, Sept. 6, 1780.*

*AT a great and respectable Meeting of the Friends  
of EDMUND BURKE, Esq; held at the  
Guildhall this day;*

*The Right Worshipful the Mayor in the Chair;*

*Resolved, That Mr. Burke, as a representative  
for this city, has done all possible honour to himself  
as a senator and a man, and that we do heartily and  
highly approve of his conduct, as the result of an  
enlightened loyalty to his sovereign; a warm and  
zealous love to his country, through its widely-ex-  
tended empire; a jealous and watchful care of the  
liberties of his fellow-subjects; an enlarged and li-  
beral understanding of our commercial interest; a hu-  
mane attention to the circumstances of even the lowest  
ranks of the community; and a truly wise, politic,  
and tolerant spirit, in supporting the national church,  
with a reasonable indulgence to all who dissent from  
it; and we wish to express the most marked ab-  
horrence of the base arts which have been employed,  
without regard to truth and reason, to misrepresent  
his eminent services to his country.*

*Resolved, That this resolution be copied out, and  
signed by the Chairman, and be by him presented to  
Mr. Burke, as the fullest expression of the respectful  
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and grateful sense we entertain of his merits and *jeu's* vices, public and private, to the Citizens of Bristol, as a man and a representative.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Worshipful the Mayor, who so ably and worthily presided in this Meeting.

*Resolved*, That it is the earnest request of this Meeting to Mr. Burke, that he should again offer himself a candidate to represent this city in Parliament; assuring him of that full and strenuous support which is due to the merits of so excellent a representative.

This business being over, Mr. Burke went to the Exchange, and offered himself as a candidate in the usual manner. He was accompanied to the Council-house, and from thence to the Exchange, by a large body of most respectable Gentlemen, amongst whom were the following Members of the Corporation, viz. Mr. Mayor, Mr. Alderman Smith, Mr. Alderman Deane, Mr. Alderman Gordon, William Wear, Samuel Munckley, John Merlott, John Crofts, Levy Anet, John Fisher Wear, Benjamin Loscombe, Philip Pretheroe, Samuel Span, Joseph Smith, Richard Briggs, and John Noble, Esquires.

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